

Frequently Asked Questions

Dear Fairfax County Residents,

Using a **“service first”** philosophy, the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department strives to provide the best emergency medical service possible to its residents and visitors. Our people, training, equipment, and professionalism enable us to give you around-the-clock quality emergency medical care. We do it with competence, compassion, and an intense sense of duty to the people we serve.

Emergency Medical Service (EMS) transport billing is scheduled to begin on April 1, 2005, in Fairfax County. We want residents to know, without fail, that **no one will ever be denied service because of ability to pay or for lack of health insurance**. When residents need emergency assistance, we want them to call **9-1-1** without hesitation.

Our billing program is based on concern for the medical and financial health of our county residents. We have designed this program to minimize the out-of-pocket costs for county residents. As such, after patients’ insurance companies, Medicare or Medicaid are billed for services, we will waive remaining co-pays and deductibles for county residents. Uninsured residents will be treated with compassion and provided with options to ensure financial hardship is avoided. There will be no charge for emergency medical care treatment if the patient is not transported.

EMS resources dedicated to our residents and visitors continue to grow, in recognition of the needs of the people we serve. Our almost 400 advanced life support (ALS) providers, all of our firefighter/emergency medical technicians, our 35 ALS fire engines, 22 ALS units, and 18 ambulances form the foundation for a second-to-none, high quality EMS system. We believe it is the best in the country.

Our commitment to you is providing the best EMS care possible—period. We are proud and privileged to do so.

Respectfully,



Michael P. Neuhard
Fire Chief

When will Fairfax County implement EMS billing?

Program implementation is scheduled for April 1, 2005.

How does billing work?

Fairfax County has contracted with a company to handle the EMS transport billing. After patient care is provided, insurance information will be obtained routinely, often at the hospital. Fairfax County will waive co-payments and deductibles for county residents.



Residents will receive an initial statement from the billing company. For county residents who are uninsured, Fairfax County has adopted a compassionate billing policy.

What are the charges for emergency medical transport services?

Charges include:

- \$300 for Basic Life Support (BLS) transport
- \$400 for Advanced Life Support, level 1 (ALS1) transport, (serious medical problems or traumatic injury)
- \$550 for Advanced Life Support, level 2 (ALS2) transport, (cardiac arrest)
- \$7.50 per mile, from pick-up point to the hospital for ground transport

If I don't have health insurance, and cannot pay my bill, what options do I have?

Patients transported who do not have health insurance will be sent a request for information that will include a hardship waiver form. The County will waive the transport charge for financial hardship.

Will visitors or non-county residents be charged a co-payment?

Yes, only county residents will have their co-payments and deductibles waived.

What if my insurance company will not cover my ambulance transport bill?

The County’s billing service will attempt to gain all information required to show the medical necessity of the

transport. However, if the claim is ultimately rejected, the Department will consider the charge uncollectible for county residents.

I receive requests from county volunteer fire departments (VFDs) for donations. Does this replace volunteer funding?

No. Money collected from EMS billing goes directly into the county’s general fund. The VFDs do receive financial support



from the county for some capital assets; however, the majority of the VFD capital and operating expenses are covered by donations received from the community.

Who will I call if I have a billing or insurance problem?

The billing company will have customer service

representatives to address billing and insurance questions. If you are not satisfied, you may contact the Fire and Rescue Department Patient Advocate at 703-246-2266.

How will my privacy be protected?

All Department members have been trained on patient privacy Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements and will strictly adhere to those standards.

If the co-payment for EMS transport is being waived, will there be any out-of-pocket expenses incurred?

There will be no additional charges for EMS transport for county residents who have health insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid.



As a combined career and volunteer department, we are committed to providing service that is second-to-none.

When our residents need help, we want them to call 9-1-1 without hesitation. Our firefighters and advanced life support providers have been given the best possible equipment and training to ensure your safety and well being. As a county resident, your insurance company, Medicare, or Medicaid will be charged for transport to a medical facility. For county residents who are uninsured, the Department is committed to working with you to ensure that if you cannot pay your bill, you will not suffer financial hardship. We will include a hardship waiver for residents who need one. No one should ever hesitate to call 9-1-1 because of inability to pay or lack of insurance.

Our Guiding Principles govern our strong commitment to all Fairfax County residents and visitors.

Guiding Principles

- Ability to pay will never be considered when providing service. No one will suffer financial hardship as a result of an emergency medical transport.
- The system of providing Emergency Medical Services in Fairfax County will remain caring and compassionate.
- The Department will continue to provide the highest quality care possible.
- Implementation of a charge for EMS transport services will never diminish the way care is provided by county EMS providers.

This information will be provided in alternative formats, such as large print or braille. Please allow ten days to process your request.

For more information, questions, or to schedule a community presentation, please call 703-246-2266; TTY 711. Additionally, a fact sheet is available on our web site at

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire

Fairfax County Resident



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www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire

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